



POWER LINE



Volume 2, Issue 3

Readiness Power Forward

February, 2012



Pvt. 2 Jirad Williams, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade Public Affairs

Pfc. Marcus Johnson (right), 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion support operations, works with Soldiers from 233rd Transportation Company, 113th Sustainment Brigade, to set up communications during Redistribution Property Assistance Team Academy training Jan. 24 at Camp Virginia, Kuwait.

RPAT Academy ramps up for OEF ops

By 1st Lt. Joshua James, 541st CSSB,
and David Ruderman, 402nd AFSB PAO

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait - In the history of the U.S. military there has never been a requirement to retrograde as much equipment in as short a period of time as there was during Operation NEW DAWN (OND), in which American forces withdrew from Iraq.

In order to accomplish the mission, and with all the new systems being used to transport and track equipment, it was necessary to learn new skill sets and combine them in a logical, effective combination as part of Redistribution Property Assistance Teams (RPATs) – teams formed to relieve units of equipment.

In the course of last year's massive retrograde operations, the 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, operating RPATs at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, and throughout Iraq, found innovative solutions to work out issues with operations in order to make mission.

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Set to Power Forward

Members of the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade Power Team staff play a round of Frisbee football during a two-day Power Team Commander's Conference at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

More than 40 staff members of the 402nd gathered Feb. 20-21 to assess the current state of the brigade and prepare for new missions ahead.

Guest speaker for the event was Jyuji Hewitt, deputy commander, Responsible Reset Task Force, AMC.

Briefings by section heads reflected the challenges all elements have been processing as the Operation NEW DAWN retrograde winds down and new mission sets clarify.

Adaptability, initiative, teamwork and optimism will be the brigade's watchwords going forward, said 402nd AFSB Commander, Col. John S. Laskodi.

"Things are going to change a little bit. We're going to do routine things routinely. If somebody makes a mistake, that's alright. Own up to it; we'll fix it and move on," Laskodi said.

"Adaptiveness is the strength of our Army."



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**402nd Army Field
Support Brigade**
Camp Arifjan, Kuwait

Commander

Col. John S. Laskodi

Command Sgt. Major

CSM Robert A. Canterbury

Public Affairs Officer

David Ruderman

Submissions and suggestions can be forwarded to the editor, 402nd AFSB

Public Affairs Officer:

david.j.ruderman@kuwait.swa.army.mil.

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AND AN ARCHIVE OF PAST ISSUES

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With the drawdown of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) soon to start, and the potential for future missions requiring massive reposturning, 541st CSSB created an RPAT Academy, a learning experience for Soldiers deploying to Afghanistan for that logistics retrograde mission. The concept of the academy, initially a 10-day training course, was to pass on best practices and processes that those Soldiers would need to successfully conduct logistics operations on a massive scale similar to the OND retrograde.

Subjects of instruction were to include the fundamental principles and practices required to conduct effective RPAT operations, among them learning property accountability functions, the roles and responsibilities of primary hand receipt holders, Wholesale Responsible Officer (WRO) training, customer service responsibilities and other related tasks.

"It's 10 days of instruction in best practices gained in Iraq and Kuwait as a baseline," said Maj. Damiko K. Moore, 541st CSSB support operations officer. "It's a question of knowing the process and the procedures. The 1348 (Issue/Release Receipt form) was a big step in that, the accountability piece."

The academy began its first class cycle Jan. 16 with 24 students and a second class of 36 Soldiers from 233rd Transportation Company, 113th Sustainment Brigade, began a couple days later, with graduations on Jan. 25 and 27.

"There are multiple TTPs (tactics, techniques and procedures) out there," said Lt. Col. William Cain, 541st CSSB commander, as he addressed the graduates. "But the property accountability piece is the cornerstone of RPAT operations. You will find yourself in a variety of different situations when you get on ground in OEF; however, property accountability procedures will remain constant, and you will be able to adapt to your



Photo by Pvt. 2 Jirad Williams, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade Public Affairs

Soldiers from 233rd Transportation Company, 113th Sustainment Brigade, practice setting up VSAT communications during Redistribution Property Assistance Team (RPAT) Academy training Jan. 24 at Camp Virginia, Kuwait.

situation in order to develop an efficient process at your respective location.

"Right now you may be feeling like a jack-of-all-trades and master of none, but we have provided you the tools and the reach-back capabilities you will need when you run into problems you can't solve. You can reach the experts back here to get the help you need to figure it out," Cain said.

"It is very enlightening," said Staff Sgt. Fay Dantzler of the company's 4th Platoon, home stationed at Fort Benning, Ga., as she waited for the graduation ceremony to begin in the Camp Virginia Chapel Jan. 27. Like many of her fellow Soldiers, Dantzler's MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) is 88-M, truck driver.

"The practical exercises, seeing

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New RTAC trailers dedicated at Arifjan



Photo by David Ruderman, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade Public Affairs

Marcus Donley (left to right), a Jacobs Technology DRMO analyst with TACOM; Sgt. 1st Class Valencia Utley, Joint Robotics Repair Detachment-Kuwait; Capt. Joshua Kerton, Rapid Equipping Force harvest team lead; Col. John S. Laskodi, Commander, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade; Paul Barsamian, CECOM RESET Southwest Asia chief; Tyrone Anthony, CECOM Drawdown Kuwait lead; and Stephen W. Lockridge, Deputy to the Commander, 402nd AFSB; cut the red ribbon at a dedication ceremony for LCMC trailers Feb. 4 at Camp Arifjan.

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait —

402nd Army Field Support Brigade staff and members of its Life Cycle Management Command (LCMC) partner components gathered Feb. 4 to dedicate five operational trailers.

The workspace will house staff from Rapid Equipping Force, TACOM, AMCOM, CECOM, and include the Joint Robotics Repair Detachment-Kuwait, said Walt Nielson, construction engineer with the

402nd AFSB.

“Originally the trailers over here were to provide office space for the different programs in what we call the RTAC [RESET, TACOM, AMCOM, CECOM] facility. These particular trailers with one exception were brought down out of Iraq and re-used,” said Nielson.

“Sometimes our processes can be difficult, but the key is to be resilient,” said 402nd AFSB Commander, Col. John

S. Laskodi. “What seems simple sometimes we can make difficult, but if we understand the process, we have people who continue to plug through it.

“So to the folks who work out here, thank you for what you do every day. This is just one example among the many examples across all the staff functions and all the units and all the LCMCs around here that do their jobs. I just say, ‘Thank you very much.’”



Pvt. 2 Jirad Williams, 402nd AFSB Public Affairs

Master Sgt. Jerry Ross (left) and Pfc. Marcus Johnson (center), 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion support operations, conduct RPAT Academy training Jan. 24 for Soldiers from 233rd Transportation Company, 113th Sustainment Brigade, at Camp Virginia, Kuwait.

RPAT Academy

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what comprises an RPAT and what makes it work, was the best part for me as an NCO," Dantzler said. "To me it brings a lot of opportunity, being a multi-tasker. As an 88-M, all we do is drive trucks. Now I'll be accounting for funds and finding missing Army equipment."

Dantzler said the flurry of

new acronyms didn't slow the truckers down too much. "We didn't really know them, so as the class rolled along we picked them up, pretty much by the second day," she said.

"Anytime when you first learn a set of acronyms, it takes a minute to learn what they are," said Spc. James Veen of 3rd Platoon, which is home stationed at Fort Knox, Ky.

"There was a lot of information. It's just a good idea to get

trained on what we're going to do instead of just getting thrown into it. As 88-Ms we would just go to the yard, pick up equipment and drive it away. Now we're going to be preparing the equipment for that pick up," he said.

"I'm a convoy commander, so I'm familiar with the yard itself, but not the working aspect," said Staff Sgt. Kymberlee Clark of the 2nd Platoon Outlaws,

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who was recognized as the honor graduate of the class.

"It was great, not knowing anything at all about RPATs and Mobile-RPATs. Now I'm not going to be blindsided," she said.

When asked what surprised her most in learning the operation and seeing it from the logistician's point of view, Clark said, "The amount of equipment I'd be accountable for, the dollar amount. It can run into the millions. The range of property and amount of detail involved in accounting for it was a lot to take in at first."

The 233rd graduates were scheduled to fly to Afghanistan within days and will start conducting RPAT operations within a matter of weeks, said 541st CSSB officials.

"It's a team of two, a team of four, a team of eight. It just varies depending on what you're going to be doing. The idea is for us to set up an RPAT, but we'll probably fall in under another unit," said Clark.

"This is a tough business," Col. John S. Laskodi, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade commander, told the graduating class. "Thank you very much for your service to the country, and thank you very much for what you are about to do."

He urged the 233rd Soldiers to be adaptive when they get to Afghanistan. He recounted the extensive planning that went into preparing for the Iraq retrograde, and how much of that went out the window when the timeline for OND was drastically shortened by events that no one could foresee.

"That drove a lot of things that were never really planned



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Staff Sgt. Kymberlee Clark (right), 2nd Platoon, 233rd Transportation Company, 113th Sustainment Brigade, makes a point during RPAT Academy training Jan. 24 at Camp Virginia, Kuwait.

for. And speak up, the best ideas are going to come from you. You are going to set the stage for those who come in after you," Laskodi said.

He reiterated the two guiding principles to which the newly minted RPAT specialists should adhere come what may.

"Accountability: what we have; and visibility: where it is. Don't sacrifice them for the sake of velocity," he said.

There will be a lot of people back in Kuwait, and leadership up the Materiel Enterprise chain of command, who will be tracking the progress of the RPAT Academy, its graduates and the lessons learned they send back from the field, Laskodi said. The impact of the whole learning process will only come to the fore in a year or two when OEF retrograde operations hit their full stride.

"There are a lot of people who get to read about history, but the people in this room are going to make history," Laskodi said.

"The RPAT Academy has the potential to have a major impact on the drawdown of equipment and Soldiers from OEF, and it's a great opportunity for the 541st to be able to affect Afghan operations from Kuwait," said Maj. Jason Christenson, 541st CSSB executive officer.

Its influence, and the adaptability and perseverance of its graduates, will have a direct, immediate and long-term impact on the retrograde of equipment back to the United States, he said.

The curriculum is being considered for addition to TRADOC curriculum in Logistics and Transportation schools to preserve the knowledge gained, said Christenson.